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He has been much in evidence of late, and he is of various sorts. At the one extreme are men whose entire religious life is a courageous opposition to conflict—men who, like the followers of George Fox, have for generations consistently stood for opposition to war. As to the scruples of such objectors there can be no question. They do not try to escape the burdens which war brings. They seek rather to select such burdens as best conform to their fundamental religious attitudes.

Then there are at the other extreme those who are temperamental objectors, who assume that their dislikes are operations of conscience. They have no fundamental moral attitude; they have dislikes. Never having been thoroughly trained to moral distinctions and the obligation to sacrifice their dislikes to the good of the community, they undertake to hide themselves under a pretense of conscience and religion. But their conscience is cowardice and their religion is selfishness.

Somewhere in between these two classes there is a group of men who have identified political theory with conscience. They do not believe in war between nations, although they are stimulating a war between classes. Their opposition to this present war is an opposition to an abstract principle, and they refuse to see in it any justice. They refuse to see that nations are fighting to protect themselves against the ruthless extension of political and legal theories which would set back civilization a hundred years. They are not conscientious, but political, objectors. Enjoying liberty which has been bought and is now protected by the sacrifices of others, they center attention upon the limitation of freedom of speech. They make their own liberty to talk against a national policy more vital than the liberty of the world.

But there is still another group who are neither committed to a characteristic type of religion nor are cowards and hypocrites. They are earnest souls who have come to a new sense of the teaching of Jesus. They see, as all students of his word must see, that the ideals which he set forth are the ideals of love. The sword of which he speaks is the sword of the martyr rather than of the soldier. The message of forgiveness and faith with which he brings consolation to the world is not dependent upon cannon or bayonets. To those who have given themselves over thoroughly to these ideals of love the call of the present war came both as a disillusionment and as a shock. They unconsciously identified the abstract question of war with the concrete protection of human society against those who waged war.

Had the ideals of Jesus been operating completely in history there would have been no war. Germany would not have developed her present philosophy and practice of the state. She would not have plunged the world either directly or indirectly into war.

But a definite danger to the accomplishment of Christian idealism has arisen. The question is radically different from a choice of moral ideals and goals. It is one of the morality of protecting other peoples' rights. What stand should the spirit of love take toward these peoples who have suffered untold and indescribable miseries and toward those other nations that find their liberties threatened? Let us grant that it would be vastly better if the world had possessed sufficient sanity and fraternity to prevent such dangers from arising. But they have arisen; the world is threatened; the finest things of civilization are being drowned in blood. What is the Christian man to do?

If one uses force to protect the institutions, the habits, the lives which have been produced by an attempt to realize Christian principles in society, is he working contrary to Christian principles?

If a man cannot bring himself to a position where he can sacrifice his idealistic dislikes in the interest of protecting the common weal, he has ceased to be a conscientious objector and has become a doctrinaire objector.

And incidentally he may become a traitor.